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Phone line carries radiation to U.S. Embassy in Moscow

Washington (AP)—An outside telephone line has carried radiation directly into the office of Ambassador Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, a State Department source says.

The radiation conducted along Mr. Stoessel's own phone wire was discovered several weeks ago, the source said, during a new round of technical tests to investigate microwaves apparently being beamed at the Moscow embassy by the Russians.

The new tests, run by a team of Central Intelligence Agency electronic specialists, showed radiation levels considerably higher than in earlier tests by the State Department's Bureau of Security, the source said.

The source said the CIA team also detected radiation being carried into Mr. Stoessel's office along wires connected to an overhead light.

Speaking later to reporters, Robert Funseth, a State Department spokesman, said it is "untrue that Soviet microwave transmissions are considerably higher than in earlier tests."

"Conditions at the embassy are substantially improved," Mr. Funseth said. He declined

to elaborate despite persistent questioning by newsmen.

The spokesman also denied that there has been any separate testing of the radiation problem by the CIA.

Since early February, aluminum screening has been installed on the embassy's windows to help block out radiation.

However, even after the screening was installed, the CIA found that Mr. Stoessel's outside telephone wire was "bringing the radiation right into his office on that line because of the exposure—the way the line is hooked up," according to the State Department source.

The reason behind the Soviet microwaves remains unclear. Most speculation has focused upon possible use of the beams to counter U.S. electronic snooping or for other Soviet intelligence purposes.

The CIA is reported to be enlisting a "top-notch expert" on radiation medicine to conduct an on-the-spot examination of possible health effects linked to the microwaves in Moscow.

The CIA-hired specialist will

be charged with independently rerunning, re-evaluating and supplementing medical checks already performed on embassy employees by State Department physicians.

CIA personnel operate much of the embassy's highly sophisticated communications equipment, housed in upper floors of the 10-story structure. Those same floors—which also contain the offices for Mr. Stoessel and other top U.S. diplomats—have been the main target of the searchlight-like microwave beams.

The State Department

source said Ambassador Stoessel was "beside himself" after being informed of the new radiation tests.

The ambassador expressed his concern in classified cables to Lawrence K. Eagleburger, deputy under secretary of state for management, the source said. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State, has delegated to Mr. Eagleburger main responsibility for handling the radiation matter.

In recent weeks, steps have been taken to try to minimize radiation from both the telephone line and overhead light wires, the source said.

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